

Falls Church Housing Commission
Tuesday, May 9, 2006
Meeting Minutes (Approved)

Call to Order:

Call to order at 7:32 p.m.

Roll Call:

Commissioners Present: Mr. Joseph Bodmer, Mr. Don Brobst, Mr. Eric Timar

Absent: Ms. Valora Thompson

Guest: Steve Sprague, Board Member, Falls Church Housing Corporation

Staff: Tennille Smith Parker, Housing and Human Services Division

Quynn Nguyen, Housing and Human Services Division

Kimberly Southern, Housing and Human Services Division

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of April 11, 2006 were unanimously approved.

New Business:

Housing Commission Vice Chair Selection

Staff invited the Commission to select a Vice Chair to act in the absence of the Chair. Commissioner Timar accepted the position; seconded by Commissioner Bodmer.

Annual Housing Commission Report

Staff reminded the Commission that their annual report for 2004 and 2005 is due. The Commission can present the item to the Council's June 26th meeting (originally discussed for June 19th, but there is no Council meeting that day). Chair Bodmer asked staff to prepare highlights of Housing Commission items, CDBG grantee performance data and CDBG anecdotal stories. Chair Bodmer will present the report to Council.

Council Contingency Fund FY07 Award to Shelter & Transitional Home)

The Commissioners discussed the Council's decision to provide contingency funds in Fiscal Year 2007. Specifically, the Council is awarding its contingency funds to the Friends of the Falls Church Winter Emergency Shelter and the Falls Church Housing Corporation/Homestretch for two activities that did not receive funding through the City's Community Services Fund (CSF) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs. The Commissioners commented that providing funding to both organizations is merited, however there is a concern that the Council's use of contingency funds sets a precedent where all organizations that do not receive full funding (for any reason) could simply go to Council. Moreover, this precedent create more work for Council and the

applicants as the applicants will have made at least three presentations and requests for the same activity each year. Continuing to award funds to organizations through the contingency circumvent the grant review process. The contingency fund awards also pits grantees against each other; only those grantees that are “in the know” make request to Council for these funds while other organizations that are not fully funded are not invited to make additional requests.

The Commission suggested that if the Council wishes to make the contingency funds available for this purpose, a more equitable solution would be to announce the availability of those funds as part of the CDBG and CSF process. An alternative would be to allow the Housing Commission and the Human Services Advisory Councils to make recommendations as to which organizations should be considered for contingency funds.

Old Business – none

Other Items Not on the Agenda

Chair Bodmer asked if the City had received the report from the Center for Multicultural Human Services related to the use of the Miller House. Staff replied that a report was due and that it will be provided to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Brobst asked if the Mt. Daniel Elementary students received the posters, thank-you letters, and recognition items for their participation in the artwork for Community Development Week. All items were delivered to Mt. Daniel last week and the artwork was featured in the City’s e-focus.

Staff Report:

- Falls Church Housing Corporation update (Mr. Sprague): No report
- Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) Policy Changes
Ms. Nguyen presented the proposed changes to the City’s ADU program as it relates to the selection. The City will implement several changes: a) converting selection to a lottery; b) accepting applications year round; c) requiring applicants be “ready to buy” (e.g., loan pre-approval letter, credit score, VHDA homeownership education class completion, income and asset documentation) at the time of application. Ms. Nguyen explained that the City proposed a maximum lottery participation of at least four households per ADU available. However, the Commissioners advised staff that this proposal is not equitable because equally qualified applicants who meet the priority criteria (live or work in the City) may be excluded. The Commissioners suggested using a weighted system that would reiterate the Council-approved priority criteria selection, but also allow all equally qualified persons to enter the lottery. Commissioner Brobst offered to provide a weighting model and Ms. Nguyen will report back to the Commission with a comparison of alternatives, including weighting.

- **Zoning Ordinance Changes and Affordable Housing**
Staff provided a summary of the Planning Commission Zoning Ordinance changes. The Housing Commission previous comments on pipestem lots and substandard lots were received. It appears the Planning Commission will not recommend prohibiting pipestem lots but will provide additional standards. In addition, substandard lots may not be prohibited, but may be addressed in the review of minimum lot coverage and setbacks.
- **Request for Comments on West End Park and 110 Great Falls Street**
The Commission agreed to call a special meeting on May 30 at 7:30pm to provide comments on both items in time for Planning Commission and Council review.
- **CDBG FY 2008 Awards Process**
Staff reminded the Commission that the CDBG Fiscal Year 2008 awards process begins in August and that the Housing Commission will review applications throughout the month of October. Commissioners were asked to have their schedules available. Staff also reminded the Commissioners of the limited amount of funding available- \$85,000 (nearly 50% less than the budget of the previous year).

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

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